***Which photograph best communicates a sense of place?***

**Portal: Sense of Place**

Critical Challenge

Critical Tasks

Which of the available images best represents a specific landform region in Canada?

Overview

In this challenge, students imagine that Canadian Geographic has come to them as a result of their expert knowledge of Canada’s landform regions. CG needs our class to select the single best image to represent each landform region in Canada. Canadian Geographic photographers have taken many pictures but the selection of the best one for each region has yet to be completed. Once these decisions have been made they will begin production of a calendar while will be called “Landform Regions of Canada: A Sense of Place”.

Students learning will focus on *developing* a sense of place, a deep understanding of what it means to inhabit a particular area, what it means to those who live there. They will consult various sources in order to:

* confirm or challenge their previous knowledge or preconceptions about a particular landform region
* develop a rich sense of place regarding that particular landform region
* select a limited number of photographs that best capture the essence of the region and convey it to those less familiar with the region

Objectives

Broad Understanding

Students will understand that developing a sense of a particular place involves developing an understanding of:

* what makes it unique
* how it is connected to other places and spaces
* what elements are common across that place
* how it demonstrates diversity within its boundaries
* to what extent reality is accurately or adequately represented by preconceptions or clichés about that place

Requisite tools

Background knowledge

Characteristics of Canadian landform regions including human activities

How to read photographs (see pages 25-27,Think Literacy Cross Curricular Approaches, Subject Specific Examples, Geography, Grades 7-9)

Criteria for judgment

* Criteria for what makes a picture a good representation of sense of place (Accurate, authentic, diverse, connected, sensitive*)*

*Critical thinking vocabulary*

**Justify:** being able to show beliefs or actions are in line with reason and evidence

**Perspective:** A way of seeing a situation based on your experience.

Thinking strategies

Habits of Mind

**Consultativ**e: Is inclined to seek several sources of information, solicit expert opinion and confer with others.

***Suggested Activitives***

**Pre-planning (to be revised as a result of edits)**

* Chart paper and markers for mind map activity
* Select a photograph of your local community that illustrates Sense of Place
* Copy Assessing the Photographs (BLM 1)
* prepare photographs (consider: how many groups, size of gourps, which landform regiins will be included in this activity etc.)

**Session One**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **In this section, students will:** | **Instructions to the teacher** |
| *Build understanding of “sense of place” from a familiar example and practice reading photographs* | Project or distribute several images of your school to students (e.g. formal photo of the front of the school; photo of sports team playing on field with fans watching; photo of a special event; photo of a regular day with students in hallways). Ask students to imagine that they have been asked to select the photo for the homepage of their school website. Students and staff have indicated that they want the photo to really capture what the school is like.  If photographs of your own school are unavailable, you may wish to use the photographs of Branksome Hall (note: need to get permission to use these) in Toronto, Ontario provided on BLM #1: Sample Photographs of a School. Alternatively, you may wish to begin with the photographs of a school other than your own to highlight the importance of having a deep understanding of a place before being able to select a photograph that represents it. Another option may be to examine photographs of your community available on a public website (e.g. The Weather Network) to decide if they truly capture the essence of the community.  Suggest that before they start judging each photograph, it is important to slow down and really pay attention to the details of each photograph first. This is called being **attentive to detail** and is an important characteristic to cultivate if we want to demonstrate quality thinking.  Invite students to use BLM #2: Looking for Details to record their thoughts as they examine each photo. |
| *Building criteria for a photograph that captures a sense of place* | Invite students to work with a partner to rank order the photographs from the one that best captures what the school is like to the one that least captures what the school is like.  Ask them to share their top ranked photograph and explain their decision. During the class discussion, use their answers to draw out the **criteria** for a photograph that best captures a sense of place. It is:   * Accurate – Accurately represents the human and physical features that are significant to the place * Authentic – Vividly captures the feel of the place resulting from its defining human and physical features * Diverse – Conveys a sense of the diversity of features and lived experiences * Connected – While showing the uniqueness, also shows how this place is linked or has commonalities with other places * Sensitive – Is sensitive to the meaning and significance that the various features will have for those who inhabit that place   Consider posting this criteria on the wall for future reference. |
| *Be introduced to the critical challenge* | Introduce students to the critical challenge: *Canadian Geographic has come to them as a result of their expert knowledge of Canada’s landform regions. CG needs our class to select the single best image to represent each landform region in Canada. Canadian Geographic photographers have taken many pictures but the selection of the best one for each region has yet to be completed. Once these decisions have been made they will begin production of a calendar while will be called “Landform Regions of Canada: A Sense of Place”.* |
| *Activate prior*  *knowledge* | Suggest that before they can select a photograph, they need develop a sense of each landform region similar to the familiarity they have with their own school.  Invite students to work in small groups to brainstorm what they already know about the characteristics of a particular landform region in Canada. Encourage them to consider landform appearance, vegetation and human activity that would be found in their assigned landform region.  You may wish to encourage them to include descriptive language (i.e. adjectives) that describe that capture their current sense of that region (e.g. “muddy”, “barren”, “exciting”, “cold”). and then challenge them to find evidence in their notes from their previous studying of the region that those words accurately reflect the region and evidence that contradicts the picture these words paint.  ***Assessment for learning***  *If you wish to use this activity to gather diagnostic information about students, you might consider having them indicate what they contributed to the brainstorming by providing each group member with different coloured pens or having them initial their contributions.*  Once students have had some time to capture what they already know, consider having groups rotate to see the brainstorming of other groups. If they have captured what they know on chart paper, students to conduct a gallery walk to visit other groups’ charts and add additional information using sticky notes or a different coloured marker as they go.  As a class, discuss the idea of “defining characteristics” for a region and how this would help develop a sense of place. BLM #3: Defining Characteristics may be helpful in capturing this brainstorming in student notes for future reference. |
| *Prepare for critical inquiry* | Suggest that it is important to challenge our initial preconceptions and to consult a variety of sources in order to get a rich and deep sense of a place so that we can select the photographs that best represent the region.  Indicate that it will be important to be **consultative**, to want to seek several sources of information, solicit expert opinion and confer with others when approaching this task.  Invite students to brainstorm what sources might tell them more about the region and give them a feel for what it is like. Their answers might include:  - textbook materials  - photographs  - interviews of people who have visited the region  - tourist materials  - travel websites  - travel diaries  - field trips  - maps  - statistics  - government promotional materials  Discuss the value of looking at a variety of types of sources written from different **perspectives** and for different purposes.  Consider creating small groups of 3 to 4 students who will be responsible for inquiring into a particular landform region with each student being responsible for different sources.  ***Opportunity for differentiation:*** *You might wish to deliberately group students in either mixed-ability or similar-ability groupings in order to facilitate support structures.Students could also be gouped according to Sternbergs Triarchic Intelligences – Heterogeneous groupings – Analytical, Creative and Practical.*  *You may also assign the type of resource that the students will be using for their investigation so that some students will be tackling resources that are denser in terms of text while others will be examining visuals, etc.* |

**Session Two**

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| --- | --- |
| **In this section, students will:** | **Instructions to the teacher** |
| *Gather Background Knowledge* | Provide each group with a variety of sources. (note: it would be useful if we could provide these or link to these.) Alternatively, arrange time in the library or have them find sources and bring them to class for you to approve. As individual students gather information that will help them get a feel for the region, BLM #4: “R.A.N.” Chart might help guide their inquiry.  **Assessment for learning**  *Assess students notes recorded on BLM #4 before moving to the next step of sharing their findings with the group.* |
| *Share their findings and enrich their sense of place* | Once students have individually examined a particular source and gleaned information and impressions about their assigned landform region, invite them to share their findings with their group. They might use a web diagram such as the one provided on BLM #5: Consolidating our findings, to capture the collective inquiry of their group. |

**Session Three**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Assess photographs: How well do they convey a sense of place?* | Provide each group with a wide selection of photographs of their assigned landform region or ask students to find as part of their inquiry (note: it would be useful to provide these online).  Remind students of the critical challenge: They are to rank order the 3 best photographs to be suggested to Canadian Geographic for their calendar on landform regions.  Invite students to recall the criteria they developed in the first session as they looked at school or community photographs. Ask them to use the same criteria to evaluate photographs of their assigned landform region using BLM #6: Assessing Photographs, to record their observations and assessment.  Once they have examined and assessed all the photographs, ask each group to select their top 3 choices and rank order them according to which one best conveys a sense of place. |
| *Transition to independent practice* | Invite students to summarize in their own minds, the steps they would use next time when trying to develop a sense of what a particular location is like.  Ask them to share their ideas with a partner.  Considering capturing their ideas as a series of steps and posting these steps on the wall for future reference. For example, a summary of their thinking strategies might include:  - Brainstorm what they already know and think about that place  - Examine a variety of sources to confirm and to challenge their previous knowledge and preconceptions and to learn new information about:   * *what makes it unique* * *how it is connected to other places and spaces* * *what elements are common across that place* * *how it demonstrates diversity within its boundaries* * *to what extent reality is accurately or adequately represented by preconceptions or clichés about that place*   - Use the sense of place they have developed to critically examine photographs or other sources to determine whether or not they convey a real sense of that place according to your inquiry. |
| *Nurturing self-regulated thinking* | Consider gradually releasing responsibility to students for selecting the thinking strategies that would be most helpful when they attempt to develop a sense of what a particular place is like.  Initially, you might require or encourage students to use various thinking strategies they have been introduced to here.  As time progresses and students become more adept at using these thinking strategies, consider moving them toward self-regulated thinking by encouraging them to select which thinking strategies might be most useful when faced with similar challenges. |

Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Blackline Master #1

**Sample photographs of a school**

These sample photographs are generously provided by Branksome Hall in Toronto, Ontario.

 



 

Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Blackline Master #2

**Looking for Details**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Photograph # and/or description** | **Details**  *What do I see?* | **Message**  *What do these details make think about this place?* |
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Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Blackline Master #3

**Defining Characteristics**

Use the following chart to capture what you know about your assigned landform region. Include factual details and descriptive words in each column.

Landform Region: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Landform Appearance | Vegetation | Human activity |
|  |  |  |

Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Blackline Master #4

**“R.A.N.”**\* **Chart**

My assigned region: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Source(s) that I consulted: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What I Think I Know** | **Confirmed (or Yes, You Were Right)** | **Misconceptions** | **New Information** | **Wonderings** |
|  |  |  |  |  |

\* Reading and Analyzing Non-Fiction

From Reality Checks: *Teaching Reading Comprehension with Nonfiction K-5* by Tony Stead, copyright 2004.

Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Blackline Master #5

**Consolidating Our Findings**

Use the web diagram below to record the findings of your group members as they report the results of their inquiry.

Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Blackline Master #6

**Assessing Photographs:**

**How well do they convey “A Sense of Place”?**

Photograph # \_\_\_\_ and/or description: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria for Judgement** | Strengths of this photograph | Drawbacks of this photograph |
| Accurate – Accurately represents a broad range of human and physical features that are significant to the region |  |  |
| Authentic – Vividly captures the feel of the place resulting from its defining human and physical features |  |  |
| Diverse – Conveys a sense of the diversity of features and lived experiences |  |  |
| Connected – While showing the uniqueness, also shows how this place is linked or has commonaliites with other regions |  |  |
| Sensitive – Is sensitive to the meaning and significance that the various features will have for those who inhabit the region. |  |  |

Summary conclusion: “This photograph conveys a sense of what our assigned landform region is like. We should definitely use it as one of our top 3.”

STRONGY AGREE AGREE DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

Justification: